Session Six: Software Evaluation Rubric

Collaborators: Susan Ferdon and Steve Poast

Task

The principal at your building is aware you are in Boise State's Ed Tech Master's program. She was just given the opportunity to apply for a grant that will fund site licenses for three new software applications for the building. She would like you to develop a rubric that will provide clear and comprehensive criteria for judgment of this new software. The funding for this grant is negotiable. Your job is to provide her that rubric. Unfortunately the deadline for the grant is approaching. So, you and a partner will design an original rubric that she can use to justify her selections for this grant. She must have the final copy in three weeks.

Your rubric must include the following:

1. You must highlight clear and comprehensive criteria to score the software.
2. You will sample two different software applications and evaluate them to the rubric you designed. (The principal has requested this so she can demonstrate to the board this rubric is clearly thought out.)
3. You must include a reference list for the software reviewed and research used.

Introduction

Users of this tool, created using Word, enter product information and respond to statements describing software characteristics. The use of checkboxes and expanding form fields are intended to make the tool flexible and easy to use. When used as a stand-alone tool, the Word document is locked, which allows the user to check boxes and enter text without danger of accidentally altering the form. When locked, form fields are shaded which provides emphasis needed for new users to become aware of the various places where text may be added. While text field content is somewhat difficult to read in this mode, shading is not present when the document is printed or saved as a PDF.

Pages that follow include images of the blank template, as would be seen by one using the Word document, and the evaluation of two pieces of software using this tool. Resources that were reviewed prior to the design and development of this software evaluation instrument may be found in the reference section at the end of the document.

Educational Software Evaluation Instrument

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Product Information

Title:	**Date of Copyright:**
Publisher:	**Cost:**
URL:	**Subject Area:**
Hardware Requirements:	
Operating System:	**Grade Level:**
Memory/Browser Requirements:	

Format (check all that apply)

☐ CD-ROM	☐ DVD	☐ Internet Download	☐ Online/Cloud

Educational Focus (check all that apply)

☐ Drill and Practice	☐ Game	☐ Simulation	☐ Productivity
☐ Problem Solving	☐ Tutorial	☐ Reference	

Classroom Application

Usage (check all that apply)

☐ Individual, one computer	☐ Small group, one computer	☐ Large Group, display on screen

Evaluation

Educational Purpose	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Allows for differentiation (multiple skill/ability levels)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provides opportunity to review and practice skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Provides immediate feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Branches based on student response	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Work can be saved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Requires use of higher level thinking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ancillary materials are available (i.e. worksheets, activity pages)	☐		☐	☐	

COMMENTS:

Subject Matter Content

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Aligns with district curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Objectives are clear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Content is educational	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is a sufficient amount of content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information is current and accurate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Positive reviews from credible sources					
Subject matter is age/grade appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

Progress Monitoring

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Assessment is aligned with learning objectives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pre-Assessment is included	☐		☐	☐	
Post-Assessment is included	☐		☐	☐	
Monitors and records student progress and time on task	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teacher reports are comprehensive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student/Parent reports are comprehensive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

Ease of Use	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Student log-in process is simple	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Screen directions are clear and easy to follow	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Navigation is age/grade appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Menus can be accessed from any point in the program	☐		☐	☐	
Help options are available throughout	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Accessibility features are present (speech, text, keyboard commands)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students can use the program independently	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

Presentation	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Visuals are attractive and relate to content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Audio is clear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Graphics, audio, video, and/or animations enhance instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Graphics, audio, video, and/or animations are age appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Text is legible and print size is appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bug free; program loads and runs without error	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Options can be adjusted and turned on/off (sound effects, volume, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Program is engaging/enjoyable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

Support	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
User's Manual is comprehensive and clearly written	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teacher's Guide includes suggestions for classroom use, lesson plans, and related activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical support is available online	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

Associated Costs and Services

Initial purchase price of software:

Purchase price of hardware necessary to operate program (list type, make/model, number needed, and price per unit):

Add-on costs (additional features):

Estimated cost for future upgrades:

Training costs (initial or continuous):

COMMENTS:

Recommendation

Briefly describe why you would/would not recommend this software:

Evaluator: **Date:**

Educational Software Evaluation Instrument

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Product Information

Title: TypingMaster Pro Typing Tutor, version 7.01

Publisher: TypingMaster Finland, Inc.

URL: http://www.typingmaster.com/education/

Hardware Requirements: 800 x 600 display resolution or better

Operating System: Windows 98/ME/2000/XP/Vista/7, Mac OS X, Linux/Solaris.

Memory/Browser Requirements: Internet Explorer 5.0 or greater, Firefox 1.0 or greater, Opera 7 or greater, or other Java 1.2 or ActiveX capable browser

Date of Copyright: 2009 (Windows, Intranet), 2010 (Online)

Cost: Pricing dependent on number of workstations

Subject Area: Computer Applications

Grade Level: Middle School and above

Format (check all that apply)

- [x] CD-ROM
- [ ] DVD
- [x] Internet Download
- [x] Online/Cloud

Educational Focus (check all that apply)

- [x] Drill and Practice
- [x] Game
- [ ] Simulation
- [ ] Productivity
- [ ] Problem Solving
- [x] Tutorial
- [ ] Reference

Classroom Application

Usage (check all that apply)

- [x] Individual, one computer
- [ ] Small group, one computer
- [ ] Large Group, display on screen

Evaluation

Educational Purpose

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Allows for differentiation (multiple skill/ability levels)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Provides opportunity to review and practice skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Provides immediate feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Branches based on student response	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Work can be saved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Requires use of higher level thinking	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Ancillary materials are available (i.e. worksheets, activity pages)	☐		☒	☐	

COMMENTS:

Sound alert in PC version, red strike on error. Branching: Entire drill/lesson is used if mistakes are made, lesson duration is shortened if good progress is made (Optimal Duration). Weaknesses are determined based on accuracy and speed and are immediately addressed with extra training. Satellite feature enables software to monitor typing done in other programs then save words that are used often - and have mistakes - to make personalized exercises. A variety of security settings are available within Satellite which allow confidential information to be excluded.

Subject Matter Content

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Aligns with district curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Objectives are clear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Content is educational	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
There is a sufficient amount of content	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Information is current and accurate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Positive reviews from credible sources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subject matter is age/grade appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

Touch typing: One goal is to not look at keyboard, but for lessons, onscreen keyboard is visible which shows starting key and highlights which finger to use for each keystroke. It appears to be possible to complete the lessons without actually knowing the letters you are typing. Onscreen keyboard is not visible for Typing Tests. All content is delivered via text and visuals - not appropriate for

emerging readers, ELL, or those with reading difficulties. There is a version available which includes English, Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Swedish and Finnish. Content includes 9+ hours of lessons/practice plus games, tests, and review. Additional course - six instead of five - available with online and Intranet versions of the program.

Progress Monitoring

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Assessment is aligned with learning objectives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Pre-Assessment is included	☐		☒	☒	
Post-Assessment is included	☐		☐	☒	
Monitors and records student progress and time on task	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Teacher reports are comprehensive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Student/Parent reports are comprehensive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

COMMENTS:

Pre-Test is included in online version but not Windows download. Teacher reports include time on task, percentage correct, wpm, and item analysis. Online and Intranet versions track student progress. Computer-based version tracks single user data and can be networked with teacher reports included. Text files (plain text) may be added for use as Typing Tests which provides more individualized learning/assessment as well as variety from which to choose. Online Version - Groups and users can be set with at-a-glance view as well as detailed reports.

Ease of Use

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Student log-in process is simple	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Screen directions are clear and easy to follow	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Navigation is age/grade appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Menus can be accessed from any point in the program	☐		☐	☒	
Help options are available throughout	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
Accessibility features are present (speech, text, keyboard commands)	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

Students can use the program independently	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

Most appropriate for older students and adults. No help screens though there is an online User Manual. Junior Typing Course available for users ages 8 -12 which is largely the same. Tutorial text and exercises somewhat more brief in Junior version.

Presentation	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Visuals are attractive and relate to content	☐	☐	☐	☒	☒
Audio is clear	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Graphics, audio, video, and/or animations enhance instruction	☐	☐	☒	☒	☐
Graphics, audio, video, and/or animations are age appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Text is legible and print size is appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Bug free; program loads and runs without error	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Options can be adjusted and turned on/off (sound effects, volume, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Program is engaging/enjoyable	☐	☐	☒	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

PC Version: Color and contrast is good, yet bland. The only audio is alert sounds for page changes and errors. Page layout is consistent and menu navigation is easy to follow. Visuals are limited to photograph of hands/fingers, with blue dots to indicate which to use for the next keystroke, and diagram of keyboard. Font is difficult to read both in the program and the online manual.

Online Version: Excellent use of color with keys and fingers color-coded (i.e. index finger and related keys are purple, middle finger red, etc.). Easy-to-read font and image/font size can be enlarged using zoom commands for menu screens, though not for lessons. The first time loading lessons may be slow, but not overly so. Subsequent page loads are faster. Games are much more engagning in newer, online version - different games, better graphics and sound is included.

All Versions: No audio, video, or animations except for sound alerts in Windows version; all information is text-based. Tutorials would benefit from visuals representing good posture and hand postion, as opposed to text description alone. Highlighting of current word/letter and fade-out of words already typed aids in tracking. Options are limited (sound effects on/off, wpm vs kpm) but can be adjusted. Limited color/visuals and difficult to read font make PC version less engaging ("Disagree" score) than online version ("Agree" score).

Support

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
User's Manual is comprehensive and clearly written	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
Teacher's Guide includes suggestions for classroom use, lesson plans, and related activities	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical support is available online	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

Online Users Manual includes detailed information as well as screen shots from the program to illustrate points made. No Teachers Guide is included through there is general information for teachers included in the Users Manual. Online contact forms, specific to each version, are available as is an online forum. The online forum lists overwhelmingly favorable feedback. One post listed ways that students could cheat, but support personnel reported how each of the "cheats" affected the newer version (could not cheat the new version). Answers to forum questions are timely and comprehensive.

Associated Costs and Services

Initial purchase price of software: $39.90 for one workstation (Windows), 5 licences = $119, 10 licences = $199, 20 licences = $299, 30 licences = $369, 50 licences = $469, 1 school = $549, 2 or more schools - contact vendor. Online version starts at $24.90 for single user. Online is yearly subscription based on number of users/schools. Standard School is $395 for 12 months, $595 for two years (/$298 per yearsave $195), or $750 for three years ($250 per year/save $435).

Purchase price of hardware necessary to operate program (list type, make/model, number needed, and price per unit): (none)

Add-on costs (additional features): (none)

Estimated cost for future upgrades: Online - Always up to date, no revisions needed. For network and Intranet versions, most recent version may be downloaded, apparently at no additional cost.

Training costs (initial or continuous): (none)

COMMENTS: District pricing is also available, based on number of schools. Licences are transferable - as one user finishes studies, the licence transfers to the next user. The number of licences purchased need only be the maximum number of students that will use it at any given point in time.

Recommendation

Briefly describe why you would/would not recommend this software:

Upon determiniation that cost is competitive to similar products, I would recommend the online and Intranet versions of this software. Progress monitoring is comprehensive and branching allows for differentiation based on demonstrated skills. Preponderance of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" scores reflect the overall strength of this typing program. Three areas marked "Disagree" for the PC/Windows version are rated higher ("Agree") for the online version. The remaining areas marked "Disagree" are as follows:

1) Requires use of higher level thinking - drill and practice software goal is skill development and automaticity.
2) Ancillary materials not available - Since this is a typing program, print materials are not as appropriate as for other types of software.
3) Pre-Assessment is not included (disagree) on Windows version but is included (agree) in the online version
4) Lack of "Help" screens - software is intuitive and related information can be found in the Users Manual.
5) Accessibility features - Lack of ability to enlarge window for lessons makes this software difficult or impossible to use by students with vision impairments. Tactile keyboard and alternate instruction may be needed for those students.

Evaluator: Susan Ferdon **Date:** October 15, 2010

Educational Software Evaluation Instrument

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Product Information

Title: Elementary School Success

Publisher: Herman Street - Topics Learning

URL: www.topics-ent.com

Hardware Requirements: Computer, mouse, keyboard, and monitor

Operating System: WIN & MAC

Memory/Browser Requirements: 512 RAM / 500 MB Hard Drive Space

Date of Copyright: 2010

Cost: $39.99

Subject Area: Reading, Math, Science, Foreign Language, Typing, Encyclopedia Britanica

Grade Level: K - 5

Format (check all that apply)

- [x] CD-ROM
- [ ] DVD
- [ ] Internet Download
- [ ] Online/Cloud

Educational Focus (check all that apply)

- [x] Drill and Practice
- [x] Game
- [ ] Simulation
- [ ] Productivity
- [ ] Problem Solving
- [x] Tutorial
- [x] Reference

Classroom Application

Usage (check all that apply)

- [x] Individual, one computer
- [x] Small group, one computer
- [x] Large Group, display on screen

Evaluation

Educational Purpose	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Allows for differentiation (multiple skill/ability levels)	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Provides opportunity to review and practice skills	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Provides immediate feedback	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

Branches based on student response	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Work can be saved	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Requires use of higher level thinking	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Ancillary materials are available (i.e. worksheets, activity pages)	☐		☒	☐	

COMMENTS:

Feedback is via audio response; writing assignments can be saved.

Subject Matter Content

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Aligns with district curriculum	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Objectives are clear	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Content is educational	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
There is a sufficient amount of content	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Information is current and accurate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Positive reviews from credible sources					
Subject matter is age/grade appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

While no objectives are stated in the software, the skills reviewed can be tied to district/state standards.

Progress Monitoring

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Assessment is aligned with learning objectives	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Pre-Assessment is included	☐		☒	☐	
Post-Assessment is included	☐		☒	☐	
Monitors and records student progress and time on task	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Teacher reports are comprehensive	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Student/Parent reports are comprehensive	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

COMMENTS:

Not appropriate for monitoring student assessment.

Ease of Use

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Student log-in process is simple	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Screen directions are clear and easy to follow	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Navigation is age/grade appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Menus can be accessed from any point in the program	☐		☐	☒	
Help options are available throughout	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Accessibility features are present (speech, text, keyboard commands)	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Students can use the program independently	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

All aspects of usage are appropriate for each grade level. If problems occur, teachers can assist students in navigating the program.

Presentation

	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Visuals are attractive and relate to content	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
Audio is clear	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Graphics, audio, video, and/or animations enhance instruction	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Graphics, audio, video, and/or animations are age appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Text is legible and print size is appropriate	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Bug free; program loads and runs without error	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Options can be adjusted and turned on/off (sound effects, volume, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Program is engaging/enjoyable	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

Visual graphics are not always related to the content covered. Many of the

graphics appear to be for entertainment versus educational purposes.

Support	Not Applicable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
User's Manual is comprehensive and clearly written	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Teacher's Guide includes suggestions for classroom use, lesson plans, and related activities	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
Technical support is available online	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

COMMENTS:

Website URL is available both in the manual and on each CD-ROM.

Associated Costs and Services

Initial purchase price of software: $39.99 per unit

Purchase price of hardware necessary to operate program (list type, make/model, number needed, and price per unit): 0

Add-on costs (additional features): 0

Estimated cost for future upgrades: Not available

Training costs (initial or continuous): 0

COMMENTS:

Recommendation

Briefly describe why you would/would not recommend this software:

I would recommend this software as a supplemental practice for math, science, and reading review. This software package would not be beneficial in documenting and/or assessing student progress.

Evaluator: Steven Poast **Date:** 10/15/2010

References:

Children's software evaluation instrument. (1998). *Children's Technology Review.* Retrieved from http://api.ning.com/files/YGI6OCOwuUhumL-63bL4OabN7uJszEEoI-AsbLDhu1dW9e7FJLCB12FrZAZ*6*F0kfvD8MZsXcb7IdFdE*6oEvAQs*k4FgFy/ctr_software_evaluation.pdf

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